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Accessible Resources for Cultural Heritage EcoSystems (ARCHES) : Initial Observations from the Fieldwork

ERAS-APERA International
Conference 2018,
National Institute of Education,
Singapore
12th-14th November 2018



Accessible Resources for Cultural Heritage Eco-Systems

ARCHES

Aims and Objectives of the Project

- Create inclusive European museum environments for those with impaired:
 - *Perception*
 - *Memory*
 - *Cognition*
 - *Communication*
- Develop participatory practice in European museums to sustain inclusion
- Inform technologies related to learning



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Project Partners

Partners come from Spain, UK, Austria and Serbia

Participatory Method

- Uses emancipatory research (Barnes & Mercers, 2003)
 - Accountable, open and run by those designed to emancipate
- Original method with participants with learning disability established three principles (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003)
 - Addresses issues and improves lives
 - Accesses and represents views and experience
 - Participants treated with respect



Session Participation

- Participants attend regular sessions
- Sessions started in London, beginning of 2017
- Rolled out across Spain and Austria, early 2018
- Professionals, intended end users and researchers are counted as participants
- Sessions attempt to develop a community, giving each participant a voice
- Sessions include exercises, feedback from groups, touring galleries/exhibitions, participating in exercises such as mystery shopping



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Analysis of Participant Groups

Grounded Methodology

Questions & Model of Analysis



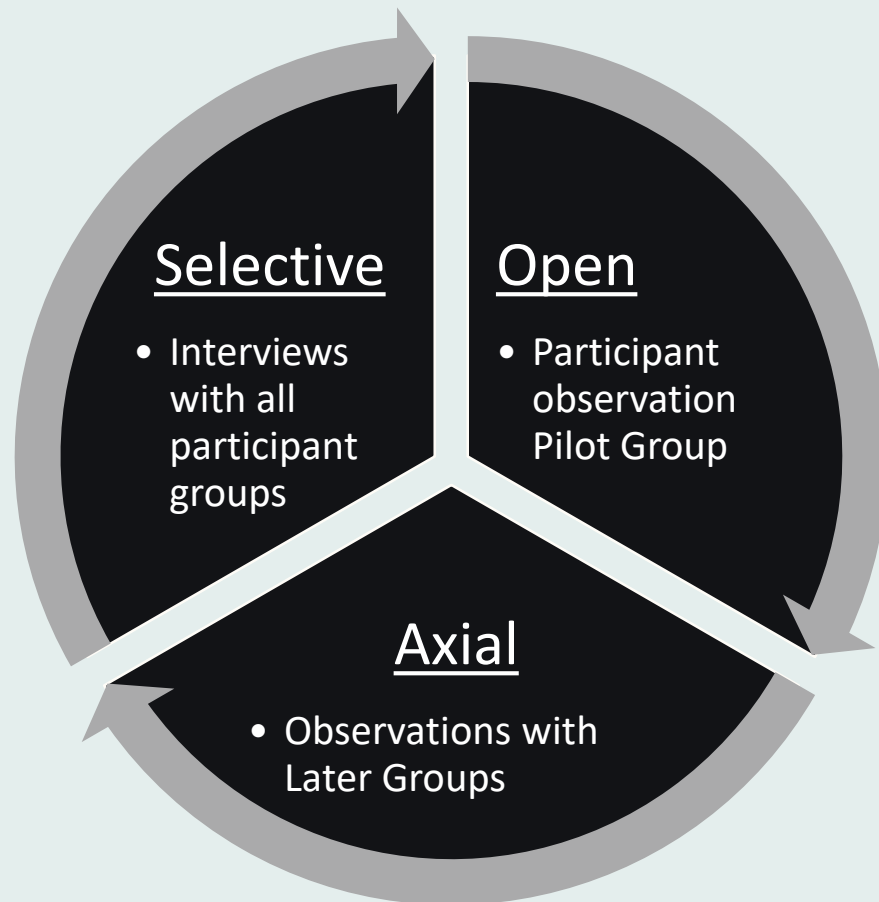
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1. How can museums in Europe best support people with sensory impairments and learning difficulties through technologies?
2. How can museums in Europe engage people with sensory impairments and learning difficulties in the development of access?
 - Evaluation through grounded methodology (Hayhoe 2012)
 - Research conducted in three stages - Open, Axial and Selective – to develop test narratives

Observations in Three Phases



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Open Phase

Findings from Pilot Group
in London

Setting-Up Groups

- Outside agencies contacted
- Museum lists used
- Mixture of agencies
 - By impairment
- Some arrived alone
- Different experiences of advising
- Technology started to arrive



Initial General Observations - London

- Groups started in large numbers
 - Numbers waned later
- High functioning participants
 - Outputs
 - Supported others
- Engaged technologies
- Some keen to show technology skills
- Multi-ethnic



Tensions in the Pilot Group

- Communication
 - Needs clashed
- Group Mixing
 - Stayed in groups
 - Individuals isolated
 - *Inter/Intra group*
- Struggle for voice
- Dependency
- Sensory impaired participants left



Categories Taken Forward to Axial Stage

Categories initially taken forward:

- *Groups*
- *Dependency*
- *Ownership*

Examined culture through these categories



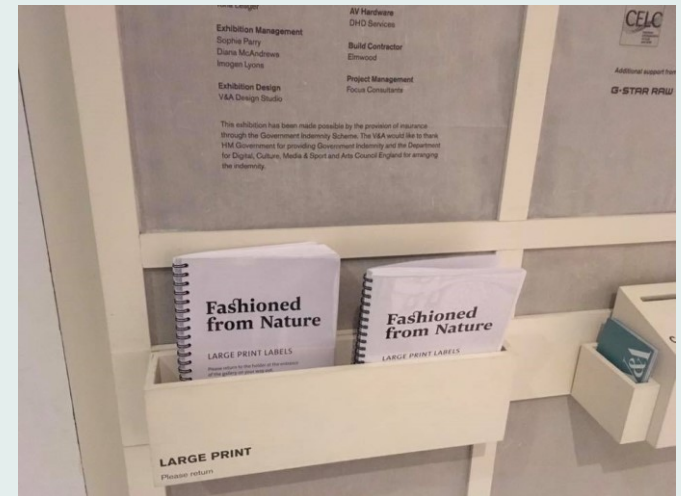
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Axial Phase

Following Findings from London &
Madrid

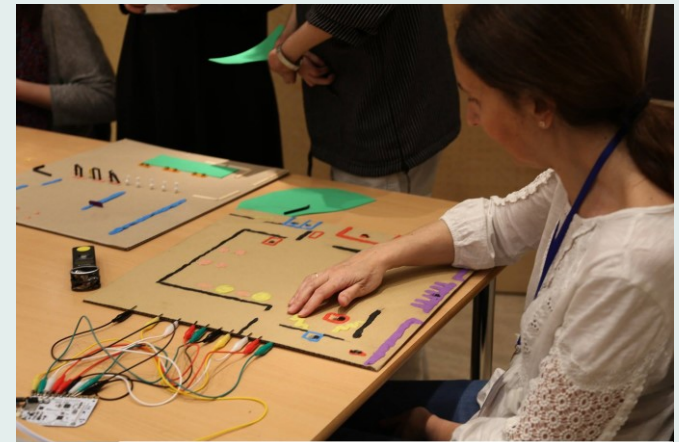
Groups

- Madrid
 - More ethnically generic
 - Numbers remain similar
 - Less conflict with staff
- Both locations grouped according to access needs
 - Stayed in gender and age groups in Madrid
 - In London, only stayed in gender groups if they arrived in them



Dependency

- Madrid
 - likely to arrive with family
 - communicated independently
- London
 - Greater dependency on researchers and supporters
- Signers depended on translator in both groups



Ownership

- Struggles for ownership according to personality
- Some participants wanted ownership
- Given tasks to make them valued
- Need for ownership not cultural, and based on emotion



Este proyecto ha recibido financiación del programa de investigación e innovación Horizonte 2020 de la Unión Europea bajo el acuerdo número 693229

Discussion

- The groups produced work that was useful to the museums
 - They affected and are affecting change
 - They are beginning to understand different impairments
 - They have the desire to continue participating in future
- However, there are tensions
 - Tensions not related to access needs
 - Tensions caused by group and individual needs

